

LITTLE DITTIES



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ELVAH KARSHNER

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CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION



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LOS ANGELES



THREE LITTLE KITTENS.

Three little kittens they lost their mittens,
And they began to cry,
 “ Oh, mammy dear,
 We sadly fear,
Our mittens we have lost.”
“ What ! lost your mittens, you naughty kittens ;
Then you shall have no pie ! ”
 Miew, miew, miew, miew,
 Miew, miew, miew, miew.

The three little kittens they found their mittens,
And they began to cry,
“ Oh, mammy dear,
See here, see here,
Our mittens we have found ! ”
“ What ! found your mittens, you little kittens ;
Then you shall have some pie.”
Purr, purr, purr, purr,
Purr, purr, purr, purr.

The three little kittens put on their mittens,
And soon ate up the pie ;
“ Oh, mammy dear,
We greatly fear
Our mittens we have soiled ! ”
“ What ! soiled your mittens, you naughty kittens ! ”
Then they began to sigh,
Miew, miew, miew, miew,
Miew, miew, miew, miew.

The three little kittens they washed their mittens,
And hung them up to dry ;—
“ Oh, mammy dear,
Look here, look here,
Our mittens we have washed.”
“ What ! washed your mittens, you darling kittens !
But I smell a rat close by !
Hush ! hush ! ” Miew, miew,
Miew, miew, miew, miew.



WHAT IS THAT, MOTHER?

“What is that, mother?”

“The lark, my child!—

The morn nas but just look'd out and smiled,
When he starts from his humble grassy nest,
And is up and away with the dew on his breast,
And a hymn in his heart to yon pure bright sphere,
To warble it out in his Maker's ear.

Ever, my child, be thy morn's first lays
Tuned, like the lark's, to thy Maker's praise.”



“What is that, mother?”

“The dove, my son!—

And that low, sweet voice, like a widow's moan,
Is flowing out from her gentle breast,
Constant and pure, by that lonely nest,
As the wave is poured from some crystal urn,
For her distant dear one's quick return.

Ever, my son, be thou like the dove—

In friendship as faithful, as constant in love.”



“What is that, mother?”

“The swan, my love!—

He is floating down from his native grove;
No loved one now, no nestling nigh,—
He is floating down by himself to die;
Death darkens his eye and unplumes his wings,
Yet the sweetest song is the last he sings.

Live so, my love, that when death shall come,
Swan-like and sweet, it may waft thee home.”



“What is that, mother?”

“The eagle, boy!—

Proudly careering his course of joy,
Firm on his own mountain vigor relying,
Breasting the dark storm, the red bolt defying;
His wing on the wind, and his eye on the sun,
He swerves not a hair, but bears onward, right on.
Boy! may the eagle's flight ever be thine,—
Onward and upward, true to the line.”

WELCOME, LITTLE ROBIN.

Welcome, little robin
With the scarlet breast,
In this winter weather
Cold must be your nest.
Hopping o'er the carpet,
Picking up the crumbs,
Robin knows the children
Love him when he comes.

“Is the story true, robin,
You were once so good
To the little orphans
Sleeping in the wood?
Did you see them lying
Pale, and cold, and still,
And strew leaves above them
With your little bill?”

“ Whether true or not, robin,
We are glad to see
How you trust us children,
Walking in so free ;
Hopping o’er the carpet,
Picking up the crumbs,
Robin knows the children
Love him when he comes.”

And though the little robin
Has no gift of speech,
Yet he can a lesson
To the children teach :
Still to trust that blessings
Will be richly given,
When they ask their Father
For their bread from heav’n.

THE PET LAMB.

The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink ;
I heard a voice ; it said, "Drink, pretty creature,
drink !"

And looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain lamb, with a maiden by
its side.

'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty
rare,

I watch'd them with delight, they were a lovely pair ;
And now with empty can the maiden turn'd away ;
But, ere ten yards were gone, her footsteps did she
stay.

"What ails thee, young one ?" said she, "why pull
so at thy cord ?

Is it not well with thee, well both for bed and board ?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be ;
Rest, little young one, rest, what is't that aileth
thee ?

"Rest, little young one, rest ! hast thou forgot the day
When my father found thee first, in places far away ?
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wast own'd
by none ;

And thy mother from thy side forever more was
gone.

“He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home ;

A blessed day for thee ! then whither would'st thou roam ?

A faithful nurse thou hast, the dam that did thee yeon,

Upon the mountain tops, no kinder could have been.

“Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee in this can

Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran :

And twice, too, in the day, when the ground is wet with dew,

I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is, and new.

“It will not, will not rest ! poor creature, can it be That 'tis thy mother's heart that is working so in thee ?

Things that I know not of, belike to thee are dear, And dreams of things which thou can'st neither see nor hear.

“Here thou need'st not fear the raven in the sky ; Night and day thou'rt safe—our cottage is hard by. Why bleat so after me, why pull so at thy chain ? Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee again.”



THE CAPTIVE.

“Wherefore would you take the linnet
From his little nest?
Blithe and merry he was in it,
Happy, and at rest.
Why should he a pris’ner be?—
Set the little captive free!

“Think if some rude giant tore us
From our cottage here,
To a grated prison bore us
Far from all so dear :
Oh, how sad our hearts would be,—
Set the little captive free !

“Life is sweet to him, when springing
Light from spray to spray ;
Life is sweet to him, when singing
In the budding May :
Shall his short life sadden'd be ?—
Set the little captive free !”

So the gentle Minnie pleaded
For the fluttering bird ;
Not another prayer was needed,
Not another word :
Kind was Willie's heart, for he
Set the little captive free !

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